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## Synopses

Yukio Ninagawa's  
*The Merchant of Venice* (2013):  
A Rejection of Interculturalism

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The late Yukio Ninagawa (1935–2016) achieved global fame as a theatre director, and was particularly noted for his Shakespearean productions. His spectacular *Ninagawa Macbeth* (1985) was received with great excitement at the Edinburgh Festival and made him a successful international director overnight. Indeed, many people were swept away by Ninagawa's international productions and foresaw a bright future for them in intercultural performances. Intriguingly, however, his Japanese-language productions were often seen as diminished by his overuse of visually exotic stagecraft and loud music, which were viewed as drowning out Shakespeare's lyrical beauty.

Especially in the 1990s, theatre groups across the world began to study and perform on the global stage, and the debate over 'interculturalism' and intercultural performances became an issue *du jour*. The notion of 'interculturalism' was discussed both directly and indirectly in the work of many directors and theorists, and the adjective 'intercultural' was also applied to Ninagawa's productions.

However, for some audiences who were *au fait* with Ninagawa's previous Shakespearean productions, his 2013 production of *The Merchant of Venice* may have come as a surprise: it did not adhere to some of the characteristic elements of his work mentioned above, and emerged as one of the most non-intercultural of all of his plays. Thus, we may pose the following questions: first, where does *The Merchant of Venice* stand in relation to Ninagawa's other Shakespearean plays and what does it tell us about his awareness of interculturalism? Second, what does an analysis of this production tell us about its relation to the textual context?

This paper questions the tendency to assume that Ninagawa Shakespearean plays are always 'intercultural'. In order to address this issue, I intend to analyse the three features that are often viewed as characteristic of Ninagawa's Shakespearean productions: interculturalism; faithfulness to the

original text; and rejection of self-imitation. In other words, in creating an intercultural production, Ninagawa left the original text untouched as much as possible as his way of paying respect to the Bard. He also used spectacular scenery to enable the Japanese audience to better understand foreign classics. Finally, he restrained himself from imitating his own past methods and instead continuously pushed his work in new directions. Nevertheless, his 2013 production showed a great movement away from the norm and it is a meaningful study to analyse it in depth.

This paper analyses *The Merchant of Venice* in relation to Ninagawa's other works and what new perspectives it offers to intercultural performance studies. It argues that the changed characteristics of this production were a challenge that Ninagawa, as director and artist, undertook in order to free himself from the constraints of contemporary interculturalism.

Death and Community in  
*Mrs. Dalloway*:  
 Usage of “Part” as a Noun

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This paper explores the troublesome yet persistent relationship between death and community in Virginia Woolf’s fourth novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*. The idea of death in Woolf’s novel has drawn much attention from the first. Although critics in the earlier period usually reduced the matter to the author’s personal problems and did not discuss its social implication, recent studies consider Woolf’s novels as works of mourning firmly embedded in the historical context. Writing in the period of the massive collision between communities, it must have been an impending issue for Woolf to think about death, community, and the correlation between the two. The word “part” is critical to advance the analysis forward. In this novel, the noun is used in several different ways such as “part of it,” “drew the parts together,” or “do our part.” Interestingly, though the meaning in each context diverges, the word often appears when the characters in the novel think about death and human relations.

*Mrs. Dalloway* imagines community in two different ways: community as a network and community as simultaneity. Community as a network consists of actual interactions between friends and acquaintance. Clarissa’s party to bring people together is her attempt to materialize and see it at work. Community as simultaneity is more abstract and can be exposed only through the act of narration. It is not necessarily an idea of an organized group but rather a sense that we are sharing the same time and the same space. The narrative technique of *Mrs. Dalloway* is the most forceful demonstration of this simultaneity. With its incomparable capability to accommodate multiple consciousnesses, it shows us that, though characters are living apart, each of them is part of one June day in London, 1923. Community as a network is what makes our everyday life possible, yet it is not enough. People pass by each other without knowing each other. The products they consume might be produced by someone in very distant places, sometimes abroad. In the early twentieth century, especially in a metropolis like London, it was necessary to find certain ways to relate the connection with these unknown people. Therefore, the success of Clarissa’s party had to be undercut by

the news of the death of a young soldier whose name is unknown to the hostess.

It would have been much easier to simply call this simultaneity nationhood. Indeed, nationalism was of course the most powerful discourse of community in the twentieth century for it could offer meaning to the death of our ordinary human selves that might seem so futile and unbearable. Yet the first world war made it difficult for Woolf to rely on nationalist discourse. Instead, the novel deliberately interprets the simultaneity of existence as “odd affinities” without any substantial bond. The sense of simultaneity that *Mrs. Dalloway* creates was the product of historical strain rather than esoteric experiment.